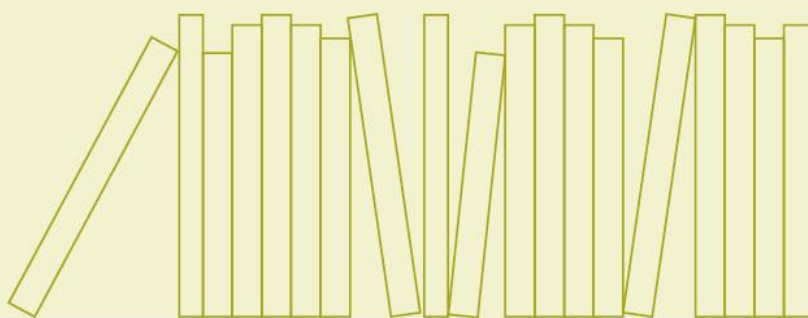


Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN



Report of the expert group meeting on the importance of time-use surveys in guiding social policies



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC



Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

Expert group meeting on the importance of time-use
surveys in guiding social policies

Virtual meeting, 3 November 2022

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REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME-USE SURVEYS IN GUIDING SOCIAL POLICIES

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A. MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Unpaid care and domestic work usually include taking care of children, the elderly, persons with physical and mental illnesses and disabilities, as well as household work like cooking, cleaning, washing, and fetching water and firewood. These responsibilities usually fall disproportionately on women, and although unrecognized as formal work, they constitute almost half of total global work time as they sustain families and by extension communities.
2. Lockdown measures that were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic forced persons to reorganize how they spent their time. For many, this meant performing more care and domestic activities, while for others it meant that decent work opportunities were farther beyond their reach. In either of these cases, women were generally more adversely impacted than men. Therefore, post-pandemic recovery economic and social policies must take into consideration the value of unpaid work for the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.
3. Valuing unpaid work is more than appreciating its societal significance. It requires designing policies which ensure that persons, and particularly women, do not become overburdened by care and domestic activities, which force them to exit the labour market and hinder their economic autonomy. Without the necessary data to measure unpaid care work, there will be limited information on the extent of the burden on women as well as their contribution to the economy.
4. The Caribbean subregion lacks the robust data on unpaid care work to inform policy interventions for the economic empowerment of women and girls and decent work for women and men. As such, there must be greater efforts to promote the institutionalization of time-use surveys in the subregion as this statistical tool can provide the critical data necessary for the design of such policies.
5. Time-use surveys elicit information on how women and men allocate their time to paid and unpaid work activities, usually in a day or a week, while accounting for other factors, such as place of residence and employment type. These surveys shed light on factors that burden individuals' participation in the labour market, which socioeconomic indicators such as unemployment rates do not capture. They also help guide social policies like childcare and parental policies that would encourage unpaid care work to be more equitable in the household.
6. Caribbean policymakers must advocate for the redistribution of domestic and care work so that women and men equitably partake in household unpaid work. If the subregion continues to overlook inequity in unpaid work, there will be persistent gender wage gaps and consistent feminization of poverty which have implications for national development efforts.

B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date of the meeting

7. The expert group meeting on the importance of time-use surveys in guiding social policies was held virtually on Thursday 3 November 2022.

2. Attendance¹

8. The meeting was attended by Caribbean statistics and gender experts from the member States of Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and the associate members of Anguilla, Aruba, British Virgin Islands, Curaçao, Montserrat, and Turks and Caicos Islands. Statistics and gender experts from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) multi-country office (MCO) - Caribbean, the World Food Programme (WFP), the CARICOM Secretariat, and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) also participated, as did representatives of several non-governmental organizations.

3. Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Presentation: “The importance of time-use surveys in guiding social policies”
3. Discussion
4. Questions and answers
5. Closing remarks

4. Documentation

9. The draft study entitled “The importance of time-use surveys in guiding social policies: COVID-19’s gendered impact on paid and unpaid work in the Caribbean” prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, was presented for review by the meeting participants and thus served as the background document for the meeting. The study analyses data on how women and men allocated their time to different unpaid work in the household during the pandemic to gain a better understanding of the pattern of change in time-use in times of shocks and to inform the formulation of appropriate policy response.

10. The study was based on information collected from a rapid gender assessment survey of the impacts of COVID-19 in the Caribbean, which was jointly conducted by UN-Women MCO and ECLAC between September 2021 and January 2022.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of the meeting

11. In his welcoming remarks, the Unit Coordinator of the Statistics and Social Development Unit of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, recalled the COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdowns that forced persons to reorganize how they spent their time. For many, it meant spending more time performing domestic and care activities, while for others it meant that decent work opportunities were farther beyond their reach. In either of these cases, women were generally more adversely impacted than men. Therefore, promoting women’s reinsertion into the labour market, particularly after acute socioeconomic crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, is essential to achieving gender equality and

¹ See annex I for a full list of participants.

women's empowerment. Women's empowerment through decent employment goes beyond measures to recover from the pandemic but includes steps to address the gap in unemployment rates between women and men, and girls and boys in the Caribbean. He stressed the need for social policies to not only promote economic recovery post-pandemic, but to take into consideration the value of unpaid work for the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

12. The Unit Coordinator acknowledged that the Caribbean subregion lacks the robust data with adequate frequencies to inform these policies. He highlighted Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 of the 2030 Agenda which aims to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” and which underscores the importance of gender equality in the opportunities to obtain decent employment for inclusive and sustainable development. Tracking SDG target 5.4 – “recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate” –and measuring the accompanying SDG indicator 5.4.1– “the proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location” – require surveys on women's and men's time-use in unpaid as well as paid work to determine how individuals allocate their time.

13. He emphasized that valuing unpaid work requires more than appreciating its societal significance but requires designing policies so that persons, and particularly women, do not become overburdened by household and care activities, which force them to exit the labour market and hinder their economic autonomy. The ECLAC study represents an attempt to initiate the discourse on the need to promote the institutionalization of time-use surveys in the Caribbean as this statistical tool has the potential to provide critical data for countries in designing policy interventions to remove obstacles to the economic empowerment of women and girls and to promote decent work.

14. The Deputy Representative of the UN-Women multi-country office - Caribbean, in her welcoming remarks, noted that unpaid care work mainly centred on the responsibilities of providing care at home which falls disproportionately on women. It includes taking care of children, the elderly, persons with physical and mental illnesses and disabilities, as well as domestic work like cooking, cleaning, washing, and fetching water and firewood. Even though unpaid care work is unrecognized as formal work, it constitutes almost half of total global work time as it sustains families and by extension communities.

15. She indicated that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, global data showed that on average, women spent about three times as many hours on unpaid care and domestic work compared to men. However, while 42 per cent of women of working age were outside of the labour force because of unpaid care responsibilities, in most countries, they worked longer hours than men, when both paid and unpaid work were combined. Not surprisingly, unpaid care work multiplied during the pandemic as more people were at home due to lockdown measures. However, data on how much time women and men spent on unpaid care and domestic work during this time were not sufficiently prioritized and collected in the Caribbean. Over the last few years, the subregion has not only experienced the increase of women's disproportionate unpaid care work during the pandemic, but also after disasters. The Deputy Representative mentioned a Disaster Needs Assessment that was done after the passage of Hurricane Maria in 2017 in Dominica where it was noted that “site visits indicated that elderly women were doing the majority of the care work, particularly in shelters”. Respondents (mainly elderly women over 65 years of age, and the heads of households comprising on average of about five persons) indicated that they were spending at least 18 hours per week on care work, which represented a significant increase since the hurricane.

16. UN-Women has, therefore, been promoting the “Five Rs”- to recognize, reduce, redistribute, represent and reward unpaid care work globally and regionally as there is now an urgent need to prioritize unpaid care work if member States are to build back equal. The Deputy Representative emphasized that unpaid care work should be recognized and without the necessary data to measure it, there will be limited

information on the extent of the burden on women as well as their contribution to the economy. Furthermore, there should be a reduction in unpaid care work through the provision, upscaling and extension of care services such as day-care and childhood centres and homes for the ageing. Inadequate care services can result in what is referred to as the “motherhood penalty” or the “carer penalty”, whereby persons, in most cases women, take on the extra burden of responsibility of care and forego full-time work or other opportunities for self-advancement.

17. The Deputy Representative also encouraged the redistribution of care work so that men do more and reduce the disproportionate burden on women. She noted that this would involve a cultural shift in attitudes and behaviours towards women being the sole caregivers in the Caribbean. Additionally, the issue of care must be positioned in the policymaking discourse to ensure that the voice of carers is fully represented. Finally, care work should be rewarded, and women must be paid equitably for the work that they do. UN-Women data on the Caribbean showed that women were over-represented in the paid care sectors like nursing, teachers, and hotel services, with lower wages compared to other sectors where men predominated such as construction and manufacturing. In terms of unpaid care work within the household, rewarding women may not necessarily mean paying an additional salary, but could include the implementation of measures such as subsidizing childcare and elder care services and accessing social protection services to ease the burden.

18. She informed the participants that the subregion lacks the necessary information to measure the burden of unpaid care work due to a lack of time-use data and encouraged member States to work with UN- Women, ECLAC and other developmental partners to close this data gap. During the 44th Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians in 2019, there was a commitment to encourage member States to measure SDG 5.4.1, and more recently in 2021 at the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) on gender equality where ministers responsible for gender equality also called on member States to measure this important indicator. She mentioned that UN-Women with the support of the Government of Canada have been working with member States to collect and analyse this critical data, in the upcoming rounds of labour force surveys. The first pilot was recently done in Grenada and will be further expanded to Barbados, Dominica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

2. Presentation: “The importance of time-use surveys in guiding social policies”

19. The consultant for ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean introduced the study “The importance of time-use surveys in guiding social policies” which looked at the COVID-19 gendered impacts on paid and unpaid work in the Caribbean. She referred to several recent surveys in the subregion which showed that the pandemic reinforced and amplified pre-existing inequalities between women and men, especially in the household where women bore the greatest burden of unpaid care activities. Based on these surveys, ECLAC and UN-Women, in collaboration with the United Nations International Telecommunications Union (ITU) conducted a rapid gender assessment survey between September 2021 and January 2022, to assess the impacts of the pandemic on different aspects of individual and household lives. The survey questionnaire was distributed and completed online by 2,242 respondents (1,592 women and 565 men) in 17 Caribbean countries and territories.²

20. She acknowledged that the data quality of the rapid gender assessment survey may have been impacted by survey response errors due to limitations in respondents being able to recall their activities prior to COVID-19. Also, the conventional way of collecting data through face-to-face interviews was not feasible due to lockdown measures, and the survey was conducted using online platforms which resulted in

² The 17 Caribbean countries and territories were: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

women respondents being over-represented. Nevertheless, the data was disaggregated by gender and analysed to show comparisons across groups.

21. The Associate Social Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean presented the empirical results of the study. He explained the results of the survey which showed that before the pandemic, more men (around 73 per cent) reported having salaried employment compared to 65 per cent of women, while women (nine per cent) were more likely to be inactive in the labour market than men (seven per cent). About one-third of all respondents worked in the sectors of tourism, hotel, food services; education; and health services, all of which were particularly susceptible to business disruptions during the pandemic. While 40 per cent of respondents stated that the pandemic did not result in changes in their employment status during the surveyed COVID-19 period, about 46 per cent of men and 43 per cent of women said that there was some change in their employment. More women (around eight per cent) reported job loss compared to just over six per cent for men, which implied that the gendered time-use impact of COVID-19 on paid work was slightly more detrimental to women.

22. The data also revealed that COVID-19 impacted women and men differently based on their employment sectors. It was interesting to note that while women were more adversely affected by job loss in the tourism sector (23 per cent compared to 15 per cent men), men were more prone to job loss in the health and education sectors. Furthermore, more women reported that they experienced decreased working hours with decreased compensation in the tourism and health sectors, with men reporting that they were more negatively affected in the education sector. Women were more likely to have experienced increased working hours without additional compensation in the health sector, while men experienced the same in the education and tourism sectors which indicated an increase in indecent employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

23. With respect to the gendered time-use impact of COVID-19 on unpaid work, the data showed that before the pandemic, women had more responsibilities for unpaid household and care work than men, with the gender gap being more pronounced for unpaid care work. However, both women and men reported time-use increases in household activities during the pandemic. The survey results showed a greater proportion of women reporting time-use increases in unpaid care work during the pandemic, especially with regards to childcare activities such as teaching, physically caring and playing with children. This showed the reality that women were substantially more overburdened by the increase in unpaid care work such as childcare activities during the pandemic, and they had less time to pursue decent employment or regaining decent employment.

24. Another aspect of the empirical results from the survey was the gender disparities in public assistance offered during the pandemic. Generally, more men (31 per cent) benefited from these relief and social support measures which included cash transfers, loan payment deferrals, loans, and tax credits, than women (26 per cent). Additionally, men were about three times more likely to receive specific financial assistance than women. The relatively lower financial support received by women contributed to the time-use burden of unpaid work, since they would have fewer financial resources to outsource unpaid work especially care activities, in times of emergencies such as the pandemic. The Associate Social Affairs Officer noted that social support measures during periods of extended lockdowns and social distancing can provide households with the financial resources to outsource some household and care tasks, thus reducing time-use burdens, especially for women who are more likely to experience job losses.

25. Based on the results of the ECLAC study, he then provided some considerations for the design of time-use surveys in the Caribbean, as to date the incorporation of time-use surveys as stand-alone surveys or with the national population and household surveys has not been established in the subregion. He reiterated that time-use surveys elicit information on how women and men allocate their time to paid and unpaid work activities, usually in a day or a week, while accounting for other factors, such as place of residence and employment type. Hence, these surveys shed light on factors that burden individuals' participation in the labour market, which important socioeconomic indicators such as unemployment rates do not capture.

26. He explained that there are two types of time-use survey questions: stylized questions and diary questions. Stylized time-use survey questions present respondents with a structured questionnaire which asks about specific paid or unpaid work and can also include questions about leisure or rest time usually conducted in a typical day. This type of survey presents answers in a way that allow respondents to provide the hours and minutes spent on each activity or it can present respondents with multiple choice options with different time quantities, from which they would choose the option closest to their time-use for the identified activity (see figure 1). Adding all hours and minutes must approximate 24 hours if the survey examines time-use for a typical day or 168 hours for a typical week. While these types of stylized questionnaires tend to be cost-effective and generate higher response rates, they require respondents to provide estimations which may reduce the validity and reliability of outputs.

Figure 1

Open question variant	Closed version variant
Q: How much time do you spend feeding, bathing, changing diapers, dressing, putting to bed, talking to, minding or playing with a child (0 and 5 years) in your household on a typical day during the last week? [2] hours, [30] minutes	Q: Last week, how many hours did you spend providing unpaid care or assistance to one or more seniors? <input type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> Less than 5 hours <input checked="" type="radio"/> 5 to 14 hours <input type="radio"/> 15 to 29 hours <input type="radio"/> 30 to 59 hours <input type="radio"/> 60 hours or more

Source: ECLAC.

27. On the other hand, the diary time-use survey asks respondents to log their activities throughout different time slots of a typical day and can be presented in the form of a structured questionnaire containing pre-selected activities and timeslots, or a semi-structured questionnaire where respondents describe the type of activity they performed during selected timeslots (see figure 2). This second type captures richer data on time-use, although costlier and more challenging to conduct, as it requires a greater level of cooperation from respondents. Additionally, data generated using this approach takes much more time and effort to analyse.

Figure 2

Structured variant					Semi-structured variant				
Activity categories	15:00–16:00	16:00–17:00	17:00–18:00	19:00–20:00	Time period	Description of activities (Up to 3 activities per time period)	Same time? (yes or no)	Location 1	Location 2
Sleeping and resting					15:00–16:00	Working	Yes	Work	
Cooking and eating			X		16:00–17:00	Working, Driving home	No	Work	On the road
Employed work	X				17:00–18:00	Cooking, Eating, taking care of children	Yes	Home	
Caring for children			X	X	19:00–20:00	Taking care of children, watching TV	No	Home	
Commuting		X							

Source: ECLAC.

28. The Associate Social Affairs ended the presentation by emphasizing that member States should consider time-use surveys as critical tools to shed light on the barriers that constitute obstacles for individuals, particularly women caring for children, to rejoin the labour market, especially where social policies may be lacking. Data provided by these surveys help guide social policies like childcare and parental policies that would encourage unpaid care work to be more equitable shared in the household.

3. Discussion

29. The Deputy Representative of the UN-Women multi-country office - Caribbean urged member States to commit to collecting time-use data to reduce the burden of unpaid care on women in the subregion. This type of data is essential for the determination and design of locations for centres that provide services for childcare, elderly care and persons with disabilities to reduce this care burden. Additionally, time-use data can guide labour and decent work policies to ensure that women have less obstacles to seek paid decent employment, and that these workplaces provide a conducive environment for the balance of home and care responsibilities.

30. She advocated for the establishment of parental care policies that promote an equal share of responsibility for childcare. Bahamas is the only country in the subregion where men can apply for family leave for a period not exceeding one week following the birth of their child, while Barbados and Jamaica are discussing the introduction of paternity leave. While some private sector stakeholders have taken positive steps for paternity leave, more must be done in this regard throughout the subregion. She also noted that the collection of time-use data and the implementation of policies can only be truly effective if there is a cultural shift that care is a collective responsibility and not only the domain of women.

31. The Director, Division of Gender Relations of Saint Lucia commended ECLAC on a very relevant and timely study on the importance of time-use surveys. The study presented a compelling case for the institutionalization of time use surveys in the Caribbean, especially at a time when sustainable recovery efforts post-pandemic are being developed. She observed that increased time in unpaid domestic and care activities during the pandemic, was a useful predictor of time-use changes in emergencies by different groups of persons. As such, given the vulnerability of the subregion to disasters, national decision-making can prevent the adverse effects of changes of time-use in emergencies and better prepare the social systems to support continuous national sustainable development efforts during and post-disaster.

32. The Head of the Census and Surveys Department of the Central Statistical Office, Grenada, provided some insight into the pilot study on unpaid and domestic work that was undertaken by her office with assistance from UN-Women. She informed the participants that the pilot study was a module of their labour force survey in 2021 with a sample size of approximately 1,335 households. The survey was administered via telephone interviews during the lockdown period of the pandemic.

33. The pilot study used stylized questions which asked respondents to account the time spent on doing unpaid domestic work, childcare, and also unpaid care for adults including elderly, the sick, and those with a disability that lived in the same household. Information was collected on how many hours and minutes spent on unpaid care and the results showed that in all cases, women spent on average twice the amount of time as men in doing unpaid domestic and care work. The largest gender disparity was in unpaid childcare with women between the ages of 25 to 64 charged with doing most of the work and young men 15 to 24 years of age spending the least amount of time doing care work.

34. She explained that one of the main lessons learnt in the pilot study process was to have self-reported information instead of proxy respondent information. Since there was a short turnaround time for collecting information on the labour force survey, proxy respondents where another member of the household answered questions on behalf of the main respondents were allowed. In most cases, the proxy respondents

reported lower time-use in minutes as opposed to those who self-reported which may have affected the validity of the results. She also mentioned that training enumerators on what is meant by unpaid care work and the activities that are involved in it resulted in better response rates, as opposed to previous rounds of labour force surveys where enumerators lacked the basic understanding of these terms.

4. Questions and answers

35. Participants discussed in more detail the data collection process of the rapid gender assessment survey. It was agreed that while there is certainly interest in the conduct of time use surveys and its practical application in the subregion, member States must find a way to collaborate on this work to avoid respondent fatigue when administering multiple surveys in order not to overburden the population.

36. It was reiterated that social protection policies that are informed by time-use surveys must go beyond compensation and revenue for unpaid work. Women must be provided with avenues to be able to outsource unpaid domestic and care work, so that they can share this work with men more equally and be able to seek and maintain decent work, as well as learning and entrepreneurship opportunities.

37. Policymakers in the subregion must advocate for the redistribution of domestic and care work so that both women and men are equal. If the subregion continues to overlook unpaid work, there will be persistent gender wage gaps and consistent feminization of poverty which have implications for national development efforts.

5. Closing remarks

38. The Unit Coordinator of the Statistics and Social Development Unit of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, thanked the meeting participants for their highly invaluable contribution and insights on the important topic of time-use surveys in the subregion. He expressed his desire to continue engagement with member States and agencies such as UN-Women, CARICOM and the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) on the issue of gender and gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the Caribbean subregion.

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- Shirelle Floyd, consultant, Statistics and Social Development Unit, email: shirellefloyd@gmail.com

Annex II**PROGRAMME**

(Eastern Caribbean time)

09.30 – 9.45 a.m.

Opening of the meeting**Welcome remarks**

Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Unit Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development
ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

Isiuwa Iyahan, Deputy Representative, UN-Women multi-country office
– Caribbean

9.45 – 10.30 a.m.

Presentation: “Importance of time-use surveys in guiding social policies”

Daniel Leon Barboza, Associate Social Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social
Development Unit, ECLAC Caribbean

Shirelle Floyd, Consultant, ECLAC Caribbean

10.30 – 10.55 a.m.

Discussion

Isiuwa Iyahan - Deputy Representative, UN-Women MCO – Caribbean

Janey Joseph - Director, Division of Gender Relations, Saint Lucia

Rachel Jacob - Central Statistical Office, Grenada

10.55 – 11.25 a.m.

Questions and Answers

11:25 – 11.30 a.m.

Closing Remarks

Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Unit Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development
ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

